

STATE OF COLORADO
Department of State

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Election Watch List

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County

Douglas

Background

On November 7, 2006, the voters of Douglas County stood in lines lasting from 30 minutes to six (6) hours in order to vote. The final voter cast his or her ballot sometime after 1:00 a.m. on November 8, 2006 – reportedly the last ballot cast in the nation.

Carole Murray, then-Douglas County Clerk and Recorder, publicly apologized for the delays and took responsibility for failing to have enough voting machines. Subsequently, a panel was formed to discuss the problems at the General Election and develop recommendations for Jack Arrowsmith, the new Douglas County Clerk and Recorder, to utilize in all elections to follow. The panel found no evidence of fraud.

Deficiencies

The clerk underestimated the number of machines needed to ensure that voter wait times were kept to a minimum. § 1-5-501(2)(b), C.R.S., requires counties that use electronic or electromechanical voting systems have one voting booth for each four hundred active registered electors for a general election.

Douglas County has stated that the county had one machine per every 432 voters. The number is substantially compliant with state law; however, the county did not use a hybrid system of paper ballots and voting machines whereby creating a greater ratio of machines to voters when technical failures occurred on a machine. Additionally, the clerk inadequately calculated the time needed for a voter to cast their ballot which further added to the already disproportionately long lines.

Remediation

The Secretary of State requires Douglas County to examine the processes associated with distribution of the voting equipment, as well as the number of locations used as polling locations.

Douglas County shall provide to the Secretary of State documentation illustrating either the purchase of additional voting equipment, or a plan detailing the measures the county is implementing to ensure acceptable voter wait times. This plan must include details regarding the distribution of voting equipment and the number of locations used as polling locations.

A contingency plan shall be created and provided to the Secretary of State detailing procedures to be used in the event of technological failure during an election. The plan shall address the counties back-up method to an electronic pollbook, for the vote center model, as well as communication procedures for election judges and county officials. Additionally, the plan shall address the method the county shall take to provide more paper ballots to a location in the event of a shortage. Specific methods shall be determined by the county election official and communicated to the Secretary of State; the objective being to ensure that voters are not subjected to unreasonable wait times.

Lastly, the county is required to participate in the Secretary of State's certification program, which is currently being strengthened to ensure that the clerk and staff have a working knowledge of all aspects of election management.